

Andrew Jackson to Amos Kendall, June 18, 1842, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>TO AMOS KENDALL. 1

1 Cincinnati Commercial , Feb. 5, 1879. For Stockton and Stokes see p. 113, note 2, ante .

Hermitage, June 18, 1842.

I am glad to find that Stockton and Stokes have memorialised Congress. The Whiggs with Berrien at their head will tether to their complaint, whilst that arch hypocrite Berrien would violate all principles of law and justice to oppress you. It surely is the duty of the Government to take it up to the Supreme Court, and have the judgment set aside, but whether Capt. Tyler will cause this [to] be done, is very doubtful, and I expect you will have to have it done yourself.

I speak experimentally on this subject, for I went on to the City of Washington in 1815 (November) to impeach judge Hall and demand a Court martial. 2 When I arrived there I waited upon the Secretary of War, stating to him the object of my journey. I had received a letter from the Secretary of War and one from President Madison informing me that complaints had been lodged against me for declaring martial law, without stating who were the informers, and calling on me for explanations. I replied very severely to these letters, and for explanation enclosed to them a copy of my answer to judge Hall's rule upon me to attend his special Court and shew cause why an attachment should not issue against me; observing in my letter that I regretted at so early a day under our republican system, that the bureaux of the executive was become the reservoirs of secret slander against the officers of the Government who was perilling everything dear to honorable

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men in its defense; that I had no doubt when their names were discovered these informers would be found to have been traitors to our country, or had basely abandoned her defense.

2 See vol. II, p. 219 n.

This brought a letter from the Secretary of War justifying my acts, but leaving a sting behind. On the interview I had with the Secretary of War, (Dallas) he inquired if I had not received his letter in answer to mine, I told him I had. He replied, in that, if they had not soothed my feelings they had been unfortunate for they viewed it as a full approbation of my conduct. I produced the letter [and] pointed to the expression. Mr. Dallas coloured a little; said he would see the President and wait upon me the next morning. He did so with a chart blanck approving my whole proceedings and declaring a Court martial was unnecessary. I then waited upon the President, and in that interview made known to him fully 0183 159 the tyranical proceedings of judge Hall; his depriving me of my constitutional right at defense, etc.; that I had the records with me to shew this, and also his altering the record. But as all my acts and conduct had been approved by him, and as the Executive of the Union, ex-officio, was bound to see the laws faithfully executed, I would leave the actings and doings of the judge to the Executive.

The next day Mr. Forsythe, the then leader of the Republican party in the House, called upon me for a sight of those papers. When he had read them he wanted me to let him have them. I replied that if you will make a call for them by resolution, I will freely give them up; but these papers are my defense should I be sued for false imprisonment and without an order I can not resign them least they might be mislaid. Mr. Forsythe left me impressed with idea that he would see me again. He was nominated as Minister to Spain, and no further attempt was made by the Executive on this subject. Therefore it is that I think Mr. Tyler will not move in your matter. I can well judge of the vexation, trouble and expense you have been put to for you honest zeal in protecting the interest of your government from such frauds as practised by Stockton and Stokes, and others. I had to war it with

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the Government for my defense of New Orleans, the Seminole campaign, and receiving Florida. My expense in printing my strictures and defense cost me a great deal of money, and notwithstanding all this, if my country required it for its honor and defense, I would adopt the same measures again. But I hope you will live to triumph over all your enemies, and have an independence for your amiable family.

Have no reliance on any Whigg; they will oppress you if they can. After swindling my son by endorsements and otherwise, in order to mortify me, they sued him in every instance they could; but thank god he is now out of their power, and I regret not the liabilities I have encountered to place him out of their power. A few years of industry and economy, with the smiles of a gracious Providence upon our labour, will place him clear of all pecuniary engagements, and in the possession of a competency; when Whiggery, with all its evils, will be troden down, and democracy over the whole Union triumphant.

I have been brought low with a severe attack of chills and fevers, added to my other afflictions, which has left me with a painful shortness of breath, which disables me from taking necessary exercise. I am like a taper, when nearly exhausted [it] will have sometimes the appearance of going out, but will blaze up again for a time. I am improving slowly and if I could get clear of my shortness of breath would be able to take some exercise conducive to health. I rejoice that you have regained your health; may you long continue to enjoy it.

Myself and family sincerely reciprocate those kind wishes of you and yours, and nothing will afford me more pleasure than to receive your visit this fall at the Hermitage; and believe me to be

Sincerely your friend